Lavender and Gold by Bunnie24

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6 months after defeating Pennywise, Richie Tozier makes a drastic decision to marry a friend to cope with losing Eddie. Though, the new Mrs. Tozier has an idea to help Richie be reunited with his one true love.

1. Chapter 1

Author's Note:

> I thought of this idea while drinking at Chinese restaurant this evening while talking to my friend. I don't know if this is going to go anywhere--but it's a start, right?

RICHIE TOZIER MARRIES IN INTIMATE CEREMONY IN VEGAS!

It was everywhere! He couldn't stand it! The constant reminder of what he did in the name of keeping his 'dirty little secret'; but then again, she was a part of it too. The asexual woman and the gay man —together in marriage, if just to keep people and their families at bay. While it was a rash decision, Richie knew Leslie from the comedy scene—though it was more behind the scenes than in front of, they both got along and Richie trusted her with his life.

He told her everything one night after a rather successful show over an entire bottle of Bourbon: Derry. The Losers. Pennywise. Eddie. All of it. She didn't even bat an eyelash as she took a sip of her beer while she listened closely, and he wasn't even sure she believed him, but he couldn't stop himself.

Leslie looked at him closely "Have you told anybody else this?" she asked quietly.

Richie shook his head as he took another sip of his glass of Bourbon "And kill my career? No thanks!" he said.

She smirked, finishing off her beer without saying anything; then one thing lead to another and all of a sudden it's: 'hey, lets scare the shit out of my agent and get married!'. It wasn't a typical Vegas affair, but nothing with Richie was as he said "I do." and left the world ablaze with gossip mags and papparazzi following their every move.

Even the Losers were shaken: Bill wanted to double date so he could meet Leslie, Ben and Beverly wanted to have them over for dinner, and Mike was just flat out confused.

‘Wait, what!?’ Mike responded in the group text.

Richie was sure they all knew it was a facade. A part of him wanted to tell them the truth, that his marraige was a lie, and all he wanted was for Eddie to still be here. Would he have done this if Eddie was still alive? Probably not. He and Eddie would be inseperatable. *Things would be different.*

He had pulled this stunt in the middle of a tour, and couldn’t hide away from the world, but he refused to answer questions about it or tweet about it, or even awknowledge it; and when he returned home, he just sunk into his bed and threw his phone under it.

Leslie stayed home in LA, she practically locked herself in the house while she waited for him to come back then swan dived into the bed next to him and they both laid there in silence for what felt like forever when Leslie finally cleared her throat.

“Y’know, I was thinking…” she started off, staring up at the ceiling while Richie turned to her “If that thing in Derry was there…what else is there?”

She turned to face him.

Richie just shook his head “I’m not going back to Derry.” he said firmly, clenching his jaw after he said the word.

Leslie sat up and leaned forward towards Richie “Just hear me out!”

“NO!” he yelled, sitting up at well, bonking heads with Leslie as his glasses knocked off and they both held their foreheads “FUCK—I’m sorry.” he whimpered, laying back down on the bed.

Leslie just grumbled for a moment, squitning her eyes closed from the pain when she took a deep breathe in and opened her eyes “What if there is something to bring Ed back?” she asked.

Richie stopped rolling in pain for a second, blind as he stared up at what he could only assume was the ceiling.

“Just humor me…”

“You just want to fuck my dad.” he retorted.

Leslie grimmaced “We’re going to Derry.” she said, her tone final as she got up from the bed while Richie groaned.

“OH, C’MON! I don’t want to go to Derry!…I just got home!” he yelled into the void. He heard silence once again, trying to listen out for Leslie but he heard nothing.

“Bitch?” he called out. Nothing. He called out to her again. Still nothing.

Richie finally huffed “Can you at least help me find my glasses?” he yelled out.

He felt something hit his face as he flinched, feeling around the bed to find his glasses and put them on “Thank you.” he remarked.

He huffed, all the memories of 6 months ago coming to a head—he had spent all that time trying to contain his pain and his anguish, he spend it trying to forget what Pennywise looked like and everything in between; to say he hated Derry was an understatement. But deep down, he knew Leslie had a point—and deep further down in himself, he hoped she was right.

2. Chapter 2

They sat in their seats; Richie's leg was bouncing as he looked out the window from his seat while Leslie just read her book, trying to ignore her husband's twitching as she waited for the plane to take off.

"I don't want to do this," Richie muttered.

Leslie rolled her eyes. "I know, but it's something to consider? Besides, if I'm wrong you can just divorce me." she remarked, not even looking away from her book.

Richie turned his head sharply towards her, a frown on his face as he shook his head. "Why would you even say something like that!?" he said, in a slightly pained voice.

Leslie put her book down and looked at Richie, her features going soft as she sighed. "Because…" she looked around the plane before leaning forward, "Richie, it's not like any of this is real," she whispered.

She was right. Yet again, she was right—she's always fucking right! Why are women always right!? He huffed as he looked at her. "That's not true!" he spat, "I love you, Leslie, and even though you might be my glorified cock sucker, you're still my friend—and that's real as fuck!"

He felt a sting on his cheek, realizing she had slapped him across the face. The fellow travelers responded with 'oohh's' and gasps as Richie's glasses fell sideways along his face.

"Way to go, Trashmouth!" a fan responded as they moved down the aisle.

Richie adjusted his glasses. "I'm sorry," he said, facing forward in his seat as he began tapping his fingers against the arm rest he shared with Leslie. She went back to her book and ignored his constant fidgeting while the pilot turned on the 'fasten seatbelt' sign.

They were both quiet, feeling like they were being watched—a few

fans had recognized Richie as they got on the plane and the gossip columns had only gotten worse…in fact, one was staring Richie in the face from the pocket of the seat in front of him. He stared back at it for a minute before reaching out for Leslie's hand and lacing his fingers with hers.

Leslie glanced over and looked at their joined hands as he pulled her hand towards him and kissed the back of it.

"Hey," she muttered, getting Richie's attention. "It's going to be okay. Whatever happens, everything is going to be okay."

He nodded. "Yeah, I know."

When they landed in Bangor, Richie hurried to get a rental car while Leslie trailed behind, lugging her carry-on bag and trying to keep up with his long steps. They made the hour drive to Derry and the infamous Derry Townhouse Inn.

They pulled up to the inn and Richie just stared at the Victorian house that stood there, unassuming, and let all the memories come flooding back to him: Bev relaying the dreams she had, as they sat in the living room arguing over whether or not to fight Pennywise, yelling about their impending doom.

He turned off the ignition as he sat there. Leslie looked over at him and waited for him to say or do something, though it became obvious that if it were all up to him, he'd stay in the car forever.

"You hungry?" she asked.

"I guess…"

Leslie looked out the window with a faint smile on her lips. "I saw a Chinese restaurant on the way in…"

“NO!” Richie yelled, scaring Leslie further into her seat. Richie sighed as he looked at her. “I just…I don’t want Chinese,” he continued.

Silence filled the car before Leslie huffed and opened her door. “You can stay in here and…I don’t know, contemplate your existence. I’m gonna go check us in. But if you bail on me, I’ll kill you,” she said before leaving the car.

Richie sighed as she slammed the car door shut and hopped up the stairs to enter the inn. He sat in the car and just looked out at Derry. Nothing had changed in the 6 months he had left, apart from the season, and it wasn’t anything exciting: dead plants, endless snow, and inescapable bleakness. Vague memories of his childhood with Bill, Stanley, and Eddie—and how Stanley would be bundled in at least 10 layers while Eddie claimed they’d all catch a cold or the flu if they stayed out too late in the melting snow.

“Fucking hypochondriac,” he muttered with a faint smile, though he knew it wasn’t Eddie’s fault. His mother had poisoned his mind with all those ridiculous things, bless her soul—NOT!

He was so lost in thought that he jumped when he heard the car door slam shut, turning to see Leslie in the passenger seat with an unusual look on her face.

“What?” Richie asked.

Leslie shook her head. “Nothing,” she said sharply.

“Did something happen?” Richie asked, his hand gently grabbing her arm.

Her eyes were widened slightly and her lips pursed as she shook her head. “No. Nothing in particular. It’s just cold.”

Richie leaned to look out the window, and saw someone peering out the window on the first floor, giggling and tilting their head back to talk to someone behind them. It took Richie a minute to get a good look at the person’s face.

“That looks like…” Richie trailed off. Bill. It fucking looked like Bill. He glared at Leslie. “You didn’t seriously—” He was too frustrated to

finish as he got out of the car and stormed inside the house.

Leslie followed after him, calling his name to try and get his attention, but his squirrely, long legged frame was too fast for her. He slammed through the front doors and stomped into the living room to find them all together.

“RICHIE!” the Losers greeted, drinks in their hands as they sat around the bar.

He turned and glared at his wife, who gave him a ‘deer in the headlights’ look. “Are you fucking serious, Leslie!?”

Leslie shook her head. “I didn’t invite them, Richie—I swear!”

“We invited ourselves,” Beverly chimed in.

Bill gently threw himself into a lounge chair with a sipping glass in his hand. “Have a drink, Rich—we should talk.”

3. Chapter 3

She'd never seen Richie so tense before as she sat in the chair across from the bar where Richie was standing, a glass full to the brim with whiskey in his hand. There was an awkward silence as they all waited for someone to say something—it was assumed Bill would, but he just stared at Richie, observing his every move.

"Would you stop fucking staring at me?" Richie spat at Bill, who finally looked away from him.

Leslie looked at the gang of misfits as they watched each other, gently smiling at Bev as they locked eyes, before glancing back over at the group.

"I'm sorry." Leslie said quietly.

The Losers looked at her, Beverly scooting her chair closer to her. "Why? You did nothing wrong."

Mrs. Tozier nodded. "I know. But…I brought Richie here because I hoped that there was something here to…" she stopped for a moment when Richie met her eyes, his jaw clenched as he gently shook his head.

Leslie sighed. "I wanted to be hopeful that there was something to reunite all of the Losers. And I know I'm an outsider, and you guys have history that I will never understand. But Richie is my husband, and when he speaks about Eddie, it breaks my heart because he misses him so much…" she looked out the window to see the darkness taking over the small town of Derry before she glanced at her watch to see that it was almost 9 in the evening L.A time.

The Losers watched her in silence before she sighed and looked up at them again. "I'm gonna go to bed," she announced softly, standing up from her chair. "It's nice to finally meet all of you." She walked out of the living room and climbed up the stairs, leaving the Losers alone.

Mike crossed his arms as he glared at Richie. "Why did you tell her?"

“Well, when the pussy’s that good…” he retorted, taking a gulp of his drink.

Bill couldn’t help but groan as he rolled his eyes, meanwhile Ben chuckled and Mike huffed, standing up from his seat. “But still…she has a point. Maybe there is more to Derry than Pennywise?”

“Possibly,” Ben said. “But where would we even start?”

Bev looked down at her watch, noticing the time as well. She hummed and leaned against Ben. “Can we talk about it tomorrow? I’m going to bed,” she said, standing and leaving the living room.

The four men just looked at each other, not sure what to say to one another, when Mike cleared his throat. “So…Leslie…what happened there?” he asked.

“Yeah—how come we didn’t get a phone call or anything? Are you guys gonna have an actual wedding?” Ben chimed in.

Richie rolled his eyes as he grabbed the bottle of whiskey. “Well, I’m still too sober for this conversation.”

Bev went down the hall, grabbing her room key from her pocket. She shoved it into the keyhole and tried turning the knob, only it didn’t budge. She tried to force it until she felt someone pull on the door from the other side.

The door opened, and Bev was face to face with Leslie. “Hello again,” she greeted, smiling at her.

Leslie smiled back. “Hi. You trying to break into my room?”

“No—I was trying to get into mine…but…” She looked down at her key: 209. “Ohh…209, not 206,” she mumbled to herself.

They both chuckled, and Leslie opened the door wider. “Do you want to come in?” she offered.

“I’d love to.” Bev walked into the room and looked around; if memory served her right, this was Eddie’s room—she looked into the bathroom and almost hoped to see the puddle of blood from when Bowers stabbed him, but the floor was spotless.

“Thank you, for coming…” Leslie said.

Bev looked over her shoulder. “Yeah, no problem. I’m sorry that we intruded. It’s just…Losers stick together. And when you told me that you and Richie were coming back, I thought maybe Ben and I should too. And then Bill wanted to come, and then Mike, even though he kept saying it was a bad idea.” she chuckled.

Leslie hummed, wrapping her sweater around her tightly. Bev looked the younger woman over—of all the things she’d expect Richie to do, or associate himself with, she couldn’t picture Leslie. She was a ball of sunshine compared to Richie’s nihilistic, sarcastic, trashmouth ways. She couldn’t help but wonder if he treated her right; did he make her laugh, hold her close, or tell her he loved her? Was Richie even capable of those things?

“Are you okay?” Leslie asked.

Bev zoned back in and smiled at Leslie. “Can I ask you something personal?”

Leslie just smiled, putting her hands in the pockets of her sweater. “Sure.”

He must have downed at least five shots of whiskey while Mike, Bill, and Ben continued to throw question after question at him—what did they expect him to say? Richie wasn’t even sure anymore. And he was even less sure that they suspected it all to be a farce.

Richie wished Leslie was still down here to help him; as much as he loved giving her a hard time, he didn’t like saying anything cruel or degrading about her, at least nothing too harsh. He had to stop himself short in the moment--he didn’t want to spill his secret to

them.

“She, uh…she’s a publicist. And we’ve known each other for years,” Richie finally told them.

“Is she pregnant?” Bill asked abruptly.

“NO! What the fuck, Bill?”

“It’s just, she’s gorgeous…and you’re…” Bill tried to think of the right word to say.

“A trainwreck,” Mike chimed in.

Richie glared at Mike. “Hey, fuck you, man! Hot chicks fuck and marry ugly dudes all the time! Why is it that when all of a sudden it’s me, there’s some underlying issue!?” he yelled before taking his last shot. “Fuck you guys! I’m going to bed. And maybe I’ll fuck my wife —you guys are just jealous!” He stormed out of the living room and stomped upstairs to his room.

He pushed the door open to see Leslie and Bev sitting on the floor, sipping on his collection of tiny drink bottles. Leslie slowly turned to face him, a tiny bottle of Malibu in her mouth.

“Seriously?” he asked, defeated.

Leslie showed him the giant ziploc bag full of unopened bottles that they had yet to get to when Richie sighed, taking off his leather jacket and throwing it on the bed before closing the door behind him. He stood behind her and stroked her hair as Bev and Leslie sat in silence.

“Goodnight, Bitch.” Richie muttered before walking into the bathroom.

“Goodnight, Squish.”

Bev raised an eyebrow at Leslie “Did you he seriously just call you ‘Bitch’?”

Leslie nodded “Yeah. It’s a funny story; one night, I called him Squish

—but he thought I called him a bitch, so he yelled that I was a ‘sloppy bitch’, thus creating our very fucked up nicknames for each other.” she explained.

“That’s…kind of hilarious, actually.”

Leslie just nodded as she watched Bev finish her tiny bottle and placed it on the floor next to her. “Well, I guess I’ll go to bed. It was nice talking to you, Leslie,” she said before standing up.

“It’s nice to finally meet you, Beverly.”

Bev smiled as she left the room. Leslie stayed on the floor for awhile longer, when the bathroom door opened and Richie came out in his boxers and undershirt. “So what did you two talk about?” he asked.

Leslie stood up and walked towards him. “Oh, just life…love…sex.”

Richie smirked. “And what did you say about me?”

Leslie matched his smirk, looking away from him coyly for a moment. “That you are an amazing fuck, and have a marvelous cock,” she giggled.

“Thank you for being so gracious,” Richie retorted sarcastically.

“Hey, you’re a grower, not a shower; nothing to be ashamed about.”

They both giggled as Richie pulled Leslie in for a hug. A comforting silence came over the room, and she wrapped her arms around him tightly, basking in their moment of solitude.

“Y’know, Bill asked me if you were pregnant. Like…me marrying you was from a series of unfortunate events,” Richie told her.

Leslie pulled away from the hug and looked up at Richie. “Do you think you’ll tell them? Cause if anybody is going to understand, it would be them. They’re a good group-- not bad for a couple of losers from Derry.”

“I mean…” Richie trailed off, unable to think of anything to say in that moment. He never thought about ‘coming out’, and just the

thought of saying those three words made him want to jump out of the bathroom window. “I don’t know if I can,” he admitted.

She reached for his hand and stroked it. “You do whatever makes you happy, okay? Whether it’s pretending to be married to me forever, or openly with someone else. Promise me.”

Richie nodded. “I promise.”

Leslie smiled. “Okay,” she said, taking her hand back, “I’m gonna go to bed, for real this time!”

“I’ll be right there,” he told her, leaning in and puckering his lips at her and waited—Leslie hummed as she leaned in to kiss him, just a quick little peck before she threw herself onto the bed and got under the covers.

Richie closed the bathroom door again and looked himself over in the mirror—Mike was right, he did look like a trainwreck, going from a tour straight to the emotional baggage that was Derry. He hadn’t slept well either, always thinking about Derry, Pennywise, Eddie. Eddie. *Eddie* . When he did dream, Eddie was always there, good or bad. Richie was just glad to have him in his mind at all.

He turned off the bathroom light and crawled into bed next to Leslie, who was comfortable next to the roaring fire that he hadn’t even notice before. Richie took off his glasses and put them on the night table next to him, staring up at the blur of the ceiling, tapping his fingers against the comforter.

“Maybe we should have a kid.” Richie couldn’t stop himself. “We can name it Pennywise. Like, first name Penny. Middle name, Wise…it’d be so fucked up and yet genius at the same time,” he said.

Leslie huffed, beginning to push him out of the bed “Okay, that’s it—couch for you!” she groaned.

Richie pushed back at her. “What? No! I’m not sleeping on the couch, it’s fucking freezing out there!”

“Don’t care.”

Richie dangled off the bed, his upper body just hanging over the edge of the mattress, before Leslie gave up and went back to her side of the bed.

“Goodnight, Bitch.”

“Goodnight, Squish,” Leslie murmured.

4. Chapter 4

He knew he was dreaming, there was no way a talking unicorn was real…but he wanted it to be as he rode it into the darkness, calling out for Eddie. He heard a familiar voice coming from behind him.

“Beep Beep, Richie!”

Richie couldn’t stop himself from turning around to see Pennywise riding a flaming horse. He was right in his face, all the disgusting features so prominent, when he opened his mouth and lunged at Richie.

He screamed awake, shooting straight up as he looked blindly around the room before reaching out for Leslie, only to find that her side of the bed was empty.

“Bitch?” he called out, grabbing his glasses to see that the curtains were drawn up and the bathroom door was open, Leslie nowhere to be seen.

Richie huffed as he got out of bed and hurried into the bathroom, immediately turning on the shower and making it as hot as possible so the steam could warm him up. After taking a shower and bundling up, he made his way downstairs to hear the Losers talking in the dining room. When he walked in, they were giggling to themselves while Leslie sat awkwardly in her chair next to Bill, reading something that had her undivided attention.

“Morning Richie,” Ben greeted him, a bright smile on his face. Richie, who was still trying to wake up, hummed and gave a small smile in return before going around the table towards Leslie.

“What ya reading?” Richie asked, wrapping his arms around Leslie.

Leslie looked up at him with a small smile. “Bill’s manuscript.”

Richie turned to Bill. “Oh, really?”

“Yeah, it’s really good,” Leslie said, her voice raspy as she reached for her cup of coffee.

Richie turned back to his wife and kissed the top of her head before sitting next to her, listening to Ben and Mike talk about some tournament they had been keeping an eye on from their phones, while Beverly and Bill just listened along. He watched Leslie from the corner of his eye as she continued to read and when she flipped the final page, she put it all back on the table, turning to Bill.

Leslie nodded at Bill. “It’s good. Interesting. I can’t wait to read the rest of it,” she told him.

Bill smiled. “Thank you,” he said with a nod.

Richie turned to his wife; she held her cup of coffee close to her body and met Richie’s eyes, smiling. “You want some coffee, or breakfast?”

“No, I think I’m good for the moment…” Richie said, reaching for Leslie’s hand to intertwine his fingers with hers. He turned back to the conversation between Ben and Mike, when Mike turned to the group and sat up in his seat.

He cleared his throat. “Okay—since we’re all awake,” he said, gaining everyones attention, “I’ve been thinking about why we’re all here, and I know last night we left the conversation with no fucking idea where to start…and not knowing if there’s even anything to bring Eddie back.” He looked at Bill. “But this morning, I thought about the Shokopiwah…”

Richie groaned, “UGH, not those guys again!”

“Who?” Leslie asked.

“They’re a Native American tribe that lives on the outskirts of Derry,” Bill explained. “Last time, Mike told us that they had stopped Pennywise before…”

“But he fucking lied,” Richie groaned as he stared at Mike. “That bullshit almost got us killed, dude!”

Ben sighed. “Just—hear him out! You got any other ideas, Richie?”

“Well, Leslie can suck my cock for starters.”

“I already did that…” Leslie chimed in.

Bill groaned again, rolling his eyes. He almost spilled his coffee before putting it back on the table.

“What is your sex life even like!?” Ben wondered out loud. Leslie shook her head at him.

“Nevermind! Let’s just focus back on what Mike was saying!” she pleaded.

Mike huffed as he gained back control of the conversation. “Okay, look, I know I made some bad judgement calls about them the last time we were together. But this time, it isn’t about defeating a fucking clown—it’s about maybe bringing our friend back from the dead. This isn’t a life or death situation!”

The room went silent; the group all processed what Mike had just said when Leslie raised an eyebrow. “But…it is…”

Beverly smirked. “I think what he meant to say was that there’s no immediate danger in this situation. We have nothing to lose, really.”

Richie took Leslie’s cup of coffee and drank what was left of it while Ben nodded to himself. “I think it’s a good start. I mean, they might have something or they might be able to point us in the right direction.”

“Yeah, or they’ll tell us to ‘fuck off’,” Richie retorted.

“Richie,” Leslie said.

Richie looked at her. “No! I’m serious! What if we’re all sitting around wasting our time? Eddie is dead! He is gone! I have come to terms with this! And you fuckers should as well!” Richie said before violently pushing his chair back, standing up and storming out of the townhouse entirely.

“Richie!” Leslie called out, her and Bill jumping up.

He put a gentle hand on her shoulder and slowly pushed her back into her seat. “Let me go talk to him,” he insisted before grabbing his

coat, and following Richie outside. Bill found him sitting on the snow covered steps, and he carefully pushed the peaceful looking snow off the step to sit down.

They were silent as they sat next to each other; Richie was rubbing his eyes under his glasses when he huffed and looked out into the open snow. “Do you remember... when you punched me in the face?” Richie asked solemnly.

Bill couldn’t help but smile. “Yeah.”

Richie shook his head at the memory. “I had never felt more betrayed in my life, in that moment. You were—are—my best friend,” he said, turning to Bill, “and right now, I feel so…” he trailed off, his eyes falling back on the snow.

“Can I tell you something?” Richie asked after what felt like an eternity of silence. “And it stays between us, just for awhile?”

Bill nodded. “Yeah.”

Richie fidgeted for a moment, adjusting in his seat as he played with the sleeve of his jacket. “I’m gay.”

The two friends looked at each other and Bill smiled. “I know, Richie…”

“You know?”

He nodded. “I mean—I’ve always suspected, and after Eddie…I just knew.”

Richie nodded, looking away from Bill and putting his hands in his jacket pockets. He felt Bill put a hand on his shoulder. “No matter what, we will always love you, Richie. Losers stick together, remember?” he assured his friend. Richie nodded again, beginning to tear up as he looked at Bill.

“Thanks, man.”

Bill pulled him in for a hug. “You’re welcome, Rich.” He squeezed Richie tighter. “But I do have one question.”

Richie looked at Bill, adjusting his glasses. “Yeah, anything.”

“Does Leslie know?”

Richie smirked. “Oh, fuck yeah. She knows.”

“What?” Bill said, eyes widening.

“Yeah—she knows, she’s in on it. But, I love her. I really do. And all things considered, I would definitely spend the rest of my life with her. Even if it means being in the closet forever.”

Bill shook his head. “But that’s not fair to you.”

He shrugged. “I don’t know, man. She says the same thing, she tells me to do what makes me happy—but I honestly don’t know what that is,” he admitted. “And even if we somehow magically bring Eddie back, who’s to say he wouldn’t just go back to Myra and pretend what happened 6 months ago never happened?”

Bill was silent; Richie had a point, but they had all had changed after what happened, so why wouldn’t Eddie? Especially when he’d faced his fears head on, and died protecting his friends.

He hummed as he squeezed Richie’s shoulder. “Maybe he will, maybe he won’t. But isn’t it worth it to try? Eddie died for us-- shouldn’t we, I don’t know, return the favor?”

Richie looked over at Bill, a single tear falling down his cheek that he brushed away. “You’re right.”

“I know I’m right!” Bill joked with a laugh. “But no matter what happens, we’ve got each other, okay? And I’ll keep this to myself, I promise,” he assured Richie.

“Thanks, man.”

“Yeah, it’s no problem,” he said while looking out towards the snow. “Now can we please go back inside, cause I can’t feel my ass anymore.”

They both laughed, Richie brushing away the rest of his tears before

he stood up and put his hands in his pockets again. Bill stood up too, jumping up the steps and hurrying back inside with Richie at his side.

The Losers were still in the dining room. They had been talking amongst themselves before Richie and Bill's return, but they fell silent when the two men stepped back into the dining room; Richie sighed and went around to the other side of the table to sit next to Leslie, putting his arms around her and pulling her close.

"I'm sorry I snapped," he muttered to her.

Leslie nodded. "I know--but you need to apologize to them," she responded, pointing to the Losers.

Richie turned to the group. "I'm sorry, guys. I didn't mean to snap."

They responded in unison, accepting his apology before Richie turned back to Leslie and gently smiled. He gave her a quick peck. "I love you." .

"I love you too."

Richie stared at her for awhile, thinking about everything, and then looked back at Mike. "Okay, Mikey--where do we find these guys?"

5. Chapter 5

The sound of the snow being crushed by her boots soothed Leslie as she followed closely behind Mike, with Bev, Ben, and Richie in toe. Bill had decided to stay at the inn since he wasn't much of a fan of the cold.

She was wrapped in layers upon layers of scarves and sweaters underneath her coat—she had never experienced an actual winter before and the merciless cold was making her reconsider if going with the Losers was a good idea.

"Bill and I could have been talking about his book," she thought to herself, when suddenly she tripped on a tree root and face planted right into the snow.

Beverly gasped as Ben immediately jumped in to help her up, Leslie clearing her face of any snow and spitting up some grass she had somehow managed to find. "Are you okay?" Ben asked, brushing her hair out of her face.

Leslie nodded. "Yeah—I'm okay."

Richie came up behind her and unzipped his coat to pull her up against him. "Babe, you gotta be careful!" he told her, rubbing his hands against her body to keep her warm as she shivered.

"Your hands are freezing," Leslie muttered.

Richie nodded. "I know," he whispered back, still trying to warm her up.

The three Losers watched the couple, Bev smiling softly; Richie noticed them looking and scoffed. "What the fuck are you looking at?"

Mike rolled his eyes. "C'mon! Just a few more minutes, and we'll be there!" he said, turning away and continuing on. The rest of them followed suit, trying to keep up with Mike as he picked up the pace and almost lost them in the woods. Richie held tightly to Leslie, with

Ben and Bev walking next to each other further back, all of them stomping through the snow until Mike finally stopped and smiled to himself.

“We’re here,” he announced when they reached the top of a low hill.

The quiet commune was unnerving to the group; the Shokopiwah members stared at them as they walked by, all of them speaking to one another before Mike took a step forward and waved at them.

“Hello,” Mike said, “I don’t know if you remember me, I was here a few months back and—”

“And you stole our sacred artifact,” an Elder interrupted.

Mike paused, recognizing the older man from his last visit. “Yes, I did. And I apologize for that.”

The Elder approached Mike, a frown on his face as he looked him over. He finally nodded. “You have changed since the last time we saw you.”

“Yes, I have,” Mike responded. “I— *we* have defeated It. However, we were hoping to speak to you in regards to another matter. Something a bit closer to home for my friends and I.”

The Shokopiwah looked at each other, talking amongst themselves before the Elder looked back out to the group and motioned to the others behind Mike. “Friends of yours?”

“Yes, yes—they are my friends. They helped me defeat It.”

“Why should we help you now? After what you did?”

Mike nodded thoughtfully. “I understand. I can’t promise anything, but I can try to bring you back your artifact.”

The Elder looked back at his people, once again conversing in a tight circle for what felt like forever. When the Elder turned back to Mike he said, “My kin have decided that you meant no ill will at your last visit, and that you have always come in peace to our community. Because of that, I shall grant you this one favor.”

Mike smiled, looking back at the Losers before addressing the Elder again. “Absolutely, thank you!” he said, putting his hands together.

The group was quiet as they watched the Shokopiwah form a circle around them. The Elder sat in the middle and looked at the Losers, assessing them; they all looked to Mike, who clearly knew what he was doing when dealing with the Native tribe.

“We are holding on to hope that you may help us,” Mike said. “One of our friends, he died while defeating It. And we know it’s a long stretch, but we were hoping you knew a way to bring him back.”

The Shokopiwah tribe muttered to themselves, Richie and Leslie watching them all before Leslie grabbed Richie’s hand for comfort.

“Your hands are still freezing,” she murmured.

Richie glared at her and made a face, but continued stroking her hand with him thumb. He looked back at the tribe when they fell silent at the Elder’s raised his hand.

“My friends, resurrection is not for the faint of heart. More importantly, someone of pure heart must perform the ritual.”

“Guess that rules you out, Rich,” Leslie said, nudging him.

Richie just shook his head. He couldn’t even respond, he was too serious about this. If it wasn’t going to be him, then who? Mikey? Ben? Bill? Of all of them, he figured Beverly would be the best bet—she’d been through so much, and those with the most pain seemed to be the purest.

“How would we go about it? What do we need to do?” Leslie asked.

Richie squeezed her hand. He was convinced Mike would do all the talking, seeing as he had been the one to deal with them the last time. Richie just didn’t want to fuck this up; this was their only chance and he was too tense to let anyone other than Mike speak.

The Elder smiled at Leslie. “You would need to have him be with you…in spirit.”

“So…like a Ouiji board?” she asked.

He chuckled. “No, not in that way. Our loved ones, though gone, will always be in our hearts. He must be with you that way…otherwise, you all will be cursed with damnation by what could return in his place.”

The Losers were silent, looking amongst each other and silently weighing the cost of such a big decision. Even though Leslie had been joking, Richie knew she was right: he wasn’t pure of heart. But he didn’t want to just wait on the sidelines while the others rallied Eddie’s return. They didn’t love him like Richie did.

Richie locked eyes with Mike and nodded.

“It is a risk worth taking,” Mike said to the Elder.

“Very well,” he said with a smile. He instructed one of his tribe to go retrieve something. “I cannot guarantee your friend will be able to come back. Sometimes the spirit wishes to be left in peace.”

Richie barely managed to find his voice. “It’s fine.”

A younger man returned to the circle with a bag that he gave to the Elder, who then handed it to Mike. “There are instructions inside… but, the circle must be full of love and openness…and purity.”

Mike nodded. “I understand.”

The Losers were sitting in the living area once again. Mike was reading the instructions from the bag that the Elder gave him while they spoke quietly amongst themselves. Richie bounced his leg against the bar stool he was sitting on and looked out the window at the sun setting.

Another day gone, and what did he accomplish? Nothing.

Mike hummed as he flipped the paper over, before putting it back in the bag. He looked over at his friends. “Dare I say, it seems easy enough?”

Bill shook his head. “I doubt it. Nothing this delicate should be as easy as reading a piece of paper and going ‘okay!’.”

“Regardless, if we all stick together and do our part, this should work!” Bev chimed in.

“But what if it doesn’t?” Richie asked.

The Losers looked up at him, Ben shaking his head. “Don’t do that! Not this again! The Shokopiwah said we could—”

“Yeah, the Shokopiwah said some shit, Ben!” Richie retorted. “But there’s a chance that it won’t work! Or what if what we bring back isn’t Ed? Something evil, or…” he trailed off, looking away.

Bev looked around for Leslie, hoping she could stop the tension, when she realized that Richie’s other half was nowhere to be found. “Where’s Leslie?” she asked. The Losers stopped their bickering and glanced around.

Richie sighed, standing up from his seat. “She’s probably upstairs,” he said, quickly leaving the living room and headed upstairs where he opened his bedroom door to find Leslie laying in bed with the fire going.

Leslie looked at him, her body hidden from view by the comforter, eye just visible over the blanket. “Hi.”

Richie shut the door behind him. “Hi,” he greeted, taking his shoes and jacket off and crawling into bed with her.

“What’s up?” Leslie asked.

Richie shook his head. “I just had to get away from that conversation —I mean, seriously. Everytime they talk about the ritual, I just…”

“Hey, no matter what, everything is going to be okay,” she assured him.

They stared each other down before Leslie scooted in and snuggled close to Richie. “But let’s talk about something else, something less… stressful.”

“I told Bill,” Richie said abruptly.

Leslie raised her eyebrows. “What?”

“I told Bill…that I’m gay,” he reiterated.

Leslie shook her head. “Wha—when? How?…did that go?”

Richie shrugged. “I told him this morning while we were outside and he took it in stride. He knows about us, and he said he’d keep it quiet.”

“That’s great, Rich,” Leslie said with a soft smile.

Richie smiled back at her. “So why are you up here and not downstairs with everybody?”

“I was cold,” she said, putting her cold hand on his neck, making him groan and push her away with a laugh. Leslie retreated back under the covers while Richie adjusted in the bed. They locked eyes and she had a serious look on her face. Before Richie could ask, Leslie started speaking.

“Can we have a serious married people convo?”.

“Uhh, yeah, sure.”

Leslie let a small smile out as she thought for a moment, working up the courage to start the conversation. “So, I know you were joking… the other night, about kids. But…I just thought I would ask, do you even want kids?” she asked him.

Richie was honestly taken aback. He didn’t even think about this conversation—he never really thought past marrying someone. “I, uh…I don’t know. Why? Do you want kids?”

“I don’t know. I mean, I wouldn’t object to it. But at the same time…” Leslie trailed off.

He nodded. He understood what she meant, but on the other hand, the thought had to come from somewhere. Leslie never really took his joking too seriously, yet something about the joke from the other

night struck a nerve with her.

“Why do you ask?” he prodded.

Leslie just shrugged, not saying anything as she laid back down in bed and looked at Richie. He looked back at her while a smirk formed on his face.

“Are you…?” Richie asked, motioning to his stomach.

“I don’t think so,” Leslie responded, letting an awkward silence fall over them for a moment. Leslie didn’t mind the awkwardness, but she knew Richie did and he was clearly trying to think of something to say.

She bit her lip, waiting for Richie to come up with stupid, but she couldn’t stop herself from doing it first. “You remember when we had sex?”

Richie laughed, nodding as he buried his face into the pillow. “Yes.” He laughed into the pillow, before looking back at her. “Yes, I do. That was…intense.”

“It was pretty good, huh?”

He smiled at her, wiping away the tears from his laughter. “It was. I mean, I fucked groupies for years, but that night was something else.” He was quiet for a moment. “We make a good team,” he said softly.

Leslie nodded. “Yeah, we do.”

They stared at each other before Richie leaned in to kiss her. It wasn’t their typical peck, but a full blown kiss; Leslie held his cheek for a second when Richie pulled away and looked at her.

“Yep, still gay.”

Leslie scoffed and playfully slapped Richie as she fell further into the bed.

“But I still love you,” Richie told her.

She smiled at him and took his hand. “I love you too, Richie Trashmouth Tozier.”

6. Chapter 6

She opened her eyes slowly, the sun was barely rising as the bedroom was slightly lightened; she moaned to herself as she pulled the comforter closer to her body and cocooned herself in the sheets, closing her eyes again when she felt something slowly taking over her body.

Leslie opened her eyes, looking at the fireplace as she felt the unfamiliar sensation coming from in between her legs—when it dawned on her suddenly.

“No,” she whimpered to herself, groaning in frustration while pushing her face into the pillow.

“No, what?” Richie muttered.

Leslie stayed in place, not sure if she could explain to him what was going on. “I…” she couldn’t find words.

“You what? Are cold? Are hungry? Have to pee?” Richie asked.

She huffed as she rolled over and looked up at the ceiling “I’m horny.” she said bluntly.

Richie opened his eyes and stared at her “Seriously?”

“Seriously.” she turned to look at him, frustrated in general as she glared at him.

Richie thought for a moment “So…what are you gonna do?” he asked, adjusting under the covers “You gonna take care of it?” he asked her, his voice hinting at his sleepiness as he closed his eyes again.

Leslie shrugged “I don’t know.”

“Cause, if you are…you can go to the bathroom and do it. Or, you can do it here. Or in the car. Or downstairs…there are all those statues!”

“Jesus Christ, Richie.” Leslie snapped.

Richie smirked to himself “I’m sorry,” he said.

Leslie looked up at the ceiling “I mean…I could just let it be.” she thought outloud.

“And then it’ll become unbearable, and the next thing I know, you’re having a threeway with Bev and Ben, or going to a strip club, or paying for sex. It’s a slippery slope, my love. You should probably just take care of it. There’s nothing wrong with it, I won’t judge you.” Richie remarked, slowly falling back asleep.

Leslie rolled over again to look at him, “But I don’t really know how. This doesn’t happen often.”

Richie didn’t say anything, Leslie wasn’t sure if he had fallen back asleep or not, but she wanted to make sure when she smirked at him “I could just dry hump you until something happens.”

“Please don’t do that. I beg of you.” Richie said through soft laughter, opening his eyes and looked at the blur of his wife.

They looked at each other, Richie trying to think of something to help alleviate his wife's uncomfortable feeling but all he could come up with were jokes, or inappropriate solutions. He didn’t know what to do, how many people were in a fake relationship with an Asexual? More importantly, how does said people help their partner in their time of awkward need?

“Fuck it,” Richie said, propping himself up with his elbows “Lets have a baby. Roll over, I’ll fuck you from behind.”

Leslie couldn’t stop laughing “What?”

“I’m serious, Les. Take your pants off, lets do this! But you’ll have to guide me, cause I’m not putting my glasses on for this!” Richie told her sternly.

She sighed, trying to figure out how serious he was when she noticed his hand going down his own pants; she hummed as she rolled her eyes, adjusting herself under the covers and scooting closer to Richie

with a faint smile on her face “Thank you.” she told him.

“Don’t thank me yet. Give it like…10 minutes.” he said, sleepily winking at her.

Mike was muttering to himself as he reread the instructions and pacing in the living room; the Losers slowly woke up and watched him while he ignored them, almost as if he were trying to memorize what he was reading.

“Should we say something?” Bill asked to Ben.

Ben shook his head “I don’t know…” he muttered back.

Mike finally put the instructions down, seeing all of the Losers, and Leslie, staring at him before he nodded “I think I’ve got it. We should do it today!” he told them.

“Why, Mike?” Bill asked.

“Because,” Mike said “The longer we wait, the less likely we are to find Eddie.” he explained.

The Losers nodded, Ben looked around at his friends bundled up in blankets as they looked at each other; he felt like they were fighting Pennywise all over again, but he tried to tell himself that it wasn’t the case. There was no killer clown or ‘Dead Lights’…just an attempt at bringing their friend back from the dead.

“So, where do we do this? Here?” Ben asked.

Mike shook his head “No, I was thinking…” he stopped himself for a moment, looking at his friends as they waited for him to say something “I was thinking…the sewers.” he said softly.

“Are you fucking kidding me, Mike?” Richie yelled.

“YEAH!” Bill responded “It’s well below freezing. I mean—seriously?”

Leslie grimaced “Gross.” she muttered, glancing at Bev who shared her distained look.

Ben sighed “Guys, lets just hear him out.”

“I’d rather not,” Leslie said.

Mike glared at them “So you’ll go down in the sewers to kill a fucking clown, but not to save your friend?”

“It was kill, or be killed, Mike!” Richie said “You’re asking us to go down into the sewers in the dead of Winter—where it’s probably fucking freezing, and try to get our way back to where we fought It? Remember it caved in—you *do* remember that, right? Or am I the only one who remembers this shit!?”

“He’s right, Mike. Even if we go down into the sewers, the tunnel caved in. There’s no way we could get back in there.” Bev responded.

The room went quiet as Mike contemplated what they were saying, it was true—the tunnels caved in, he could only imagine the ramifications for the entire town once that happened—but where else could they go?

“The Barrens? Neibolt House?” Mike suggested.

Bill shook his head “The house is gone, Mikey. And the Barrens…” he trailed off, he couldn’t even think of a reason why not—he just didn’t want to go out in the cold.

Leslie was lost in the conversation, she felt bad—feeling like she had done this to them; her mind raced with ideas and thoughts but she knew that she had no place to talk. She stood up, walking out of the living room, grabbing her coat, and left the Town house.

“Did she just leave?” Richie asked, astonished by her actions as he stood up and followed behind, grabbing his coat as he left.

She wasn’t anywhere in sight, Richie couldn’t believe that in not even 90 seconds, he lost his wife in the Hellish Winter of Derry. He called out her name, avoiding eye contact with the few locals who were staring at him as he crossed the street into the park. Richie was

starting to panic when he recognized her coat further across the street, he began to run towards her, calling out her name as he crossed the street again, narrowly missing the car he jumped out in front of; Leslie turned to see Richie approaching her as he struggled to breathe.

“Leslie, what the hell?!” he asked her “Where do you think you’re going?”

Leslie shrugged her shoulders “I don’t know. I just…I just had to do something!” he said.

“What do you mean ‘had’?” Richie asked.

He could see it in her eyes, the forming tear as he subconsciously shook his head at her “Honey, don’t cry.” he told her.

“I’m not crying.” Leslie said “The wind is blowing in my face and it hurts!” she told him.

Richie nodded “Yeah, it’s pretty extreme up here in the Winter.” he told her.

Leslie sighed “Richie—this is all my fault. I brought you here, and then the Losers showed up…and now you’re all arguing about where to perform a goddamn ritual that may or may not work.” she said, fighting the wind against her face “I need to find a place. Cause this is my fault.”

Richie shook his head “Leslie, no. This is not your fault.” he took a step closer to her “You’re just being you. Helpful. Optimistic. Awesome.” he said.

“Stop trying to make me feel better.” Leslie retorted.

They stood in silence for what felt like an eternity when Leslie noticed Ben and Beverly coming up behind Richie “You guys okay?” Ben called out, reaching them as he gently patted Richie’s back.

Richie nodded “Yeah—we’re just…trying to figure out where to go.” he said.

Ben hummed, looking down at his feet with his hands in his coat pockets “Y’know, and I know neither of you want to hear this, but sewers tend to be warm in the Winter. Why do you think there’s always steam coming out of the ones in New York?” he asked.

“It’s still cold, Ben. It doesn’t matter.” Richie said.

Leslie shrugged “What if we could find some rubber suits or something? If going down into the sewers is the best option—shouldn’t we at least try, Rich?”.

Richie groaned, yet again—she was right. The logical choice was the sewers because that’s where Eddie died. He hated using him in past tense, but this had to work. It just had to.

“Maybe, if we can find another way in…I’m not trotting around in fucking gray water if I don’t have to!”

“Gray water?” Leslie asked.

Beverly smiled “Yeah, it’s what Eddie used to call the sewer water. A combination of all the pee and ‘whatever’ in Derry.”

Leslie nodded “Okay, well, yeah—I’m willing to give it a shot. I know the weather isn’t ideal, but…we’ve got to try, right?” she offered.

The Losers nodded, Ben wrapped his coat around him tighter “Okay, I’ll go get MIke and Bill, and we’ll figure out where to go.” he said before walking away.

Richie motioned to Leslie to follow as he began to follow behind Ben, wanting to get out of the harsh cold; Beverly walked with Leslie, playfully nudging her as she smiled; the two women chuckled with each other as they walked back to the Townhouse, getting ready for the adventure of the day.

7. Chapter 7

Notes for the Chapter:

> NaNoWriMo and a severe B-12 deficiency definitely kept me from updating for awhile, and I'm sorry to my one reader (hi, mom).
>
> I'm hoping to pick up the pace again to update more often now that I've got nothing else going on. But thanks all for the kudos--as always, comments are also super duper appreciated. :)

Ben, Beverly, Richie, and Leslie all squished into a small SUV while Bill and Mike decided to follow behind in Mike's car; the Losers had made a map of locations to visit to see if maybe there was a way into the sewers that didn't involve being chest deep in below freezng water.

Richie sat in silence as he looked out the window while Ben kept glancing at him and Leslie through the rear view mirror, Bev glanced over at Ben, noticing him watching them and couldn't help but roll her eyes as she looked behind her at Leslie.

"Warm enough?" she asked.

Leslie subconsciously wrapped her coat around her tigher as she nodded at Bev "Yep. Toasty as ever."

"So, how did you two meet?" Ben asked "Richie never gave us the full story…"

Leslie smiled as she looked at Richie who huffed and sat back in his seat while staring at Ben "Like I said, the Comedy scene." he said curtly.

"Actually, a client of mine was a comedian Richie was friends with. The guy was a complete putz, but Richie, all things considered, was pretty cool." Leslie said, smirking at Richie "And we became friends through mutual circles. And then one day, we're sitting around,

drinking some beers, having some laughs—and we end up, uhh…how do I say this delicately…?"

"Messing around?" Ben interjected.

Leslie nodded "Yeah, lets go with that. The next morning, we realize that we actually like each other, and Richie, being the romantic he is, says 'why should we date, lets just skip all that bull shit and get married?', and so we did." she explained, glancing at Richie who couldn't help but look mildly entertained by her story.

"How long have you two been together?" Leslie asked of Ben and Bev.

They looked at each other, Bev smiled while Ben blushed "Uh, six months." Ben said.

"Six months? Wow. That's awesome." Leslie said.

Bev nodded "Yeah, I uh—I'm in the process of a messy divorce right now, so Ben and I have to be really careful."

Leslie nodded "I'm sorry you're having to deal with that. But Richie said you're a fashion designer?"

"Yep. I had a line with my husband, which I'm giving him so I can start my own line." Bev said with a smile.

"That's so exciting, Bev! You have an ideas for your first line?"

Bev shook her head "Not really, I'm just going with the flow right now. Enjoying my vacation while it lasts."

Leslie chuckled, "Well, maybe by the time Richie and I have our first public event together, you can dress me?" she offered.

Bev gasped as she looked behind her seat one again at Leslie "That would be amazing!!! It could be my announcement!" she said with such giddy "'Leslie Tozier wears first look fashion for Beverly Marsh's new line!'…" Leslie said out loud, envisioning it all.

"I can't fucking wait. It'll be awesome! Can it sparkle? Just a little?"

Leslie asked.

Richie sighed as he met Ben's eyes from the rear view mirror, the two of them shaking their heads at their loves as they giggled over fashion and ideas. It was honestly the happiest either of them had seen them in awhile; the divorce was taking its toll on Bev, and Leslie was hiding so many secrets—Richie knew she was losing a part of herself in the process.

By the time Ben pulled the car over to the curb, Leslie and Bev had already decided to start a line together which Richie groaned "Please don't put me in a suit, I'll do anything!" he begged.

"Too late," Leslie said "I'm already envisioning Maroon." she told him.

Ben turned off the engine and sighed "Alright, first stop." he said, his voice somber as he looked out to the corner lot "Neibolt House."

Leslie looked out into the taped off, vacant lot for a second "There's a house here?" she asked.

"There was," Richie said "But it caved in when we defeated Pennywise. We left Eddie." he continued somberly.

Bev sighed, tearing up at the memory as she reached back and held Richie's hand "He was already gone, Richie." she said softly, stroking his hand with her thumb.

Richie wiped away forming tears while Leslie exited the backseat and walked towards the lot; the big chain link fence held up a yellow sign that read 'No Trespassing!', with a chain carelessly wrapped around a lock as Leslie pulled it apart and opened the door to get closer to the giant hole in the ground. Untouched snow had fallen on the concrete of the basement, with only one or two bricks left next to a well hole.

Leslie felt someone behind her as Bill gently put a hand on her back to let her know that he was there, he stared down at the hole in the basement as well when he sighed "It's still there." he muttered.

She looked at him as Bill huffed, the air cloud coming out from his lips as he shook his head "The hole we climbed down to get into the

sewers, both times we went to fight that fucking clown." he said.

The Losers joined them as they all stood on the edge of what remained of Neibolt House, bundling themselves up as they looked down at the emptiness while Leslie walked closer to the edge before leaning down to jump into the pit.

Richie rolled his eyes "Bitch—what are you doing!?" he asked.

Bill and Ben yelled at Richie in protest, Mike shaking his head in disapproval while Bev tried to hide her giggling "It's fine!" Richie yelled at them "It's my nickname for her!" he said.

"That's fucked up, man!" Mike yelled.

Leslie glared up at them "Uhh, boys? Can we put your little panty meltdown on pause and help me figure out if we can get down through that giant hole?" she asked.

The four of them looked at each other while Bev leaned down and jumped into the hole with Leslie, looking down the well that was all too familiar to Bev as she hummed "Still creepy." she muttered.

Mike joined and hummed "I don't know. I have a rope, but we'd need someone to stay behind an let us all down." he said before finally shaking his head "It's too risky. Lets check the entrance at the Barrens?" he suggested.

Bill huffed, having just finally jumped down into the pit "Okay…I guess I'll go start the car." he said as Ben and Richie leaned down to help pull him back up; Leslie and Bev walked with Mike as they themselves climbed back up, both landing in the snow as Leslie whined in frustration.

"Babe—what did I tell you about the snow!?" Richie lecture, picking her up off the flood.

She brushed herself off before glaring up at him, she was so tired of this--he was overselling whatever this was!

"I'm fine, *sweetie* ." her voice snapped as she walked past him.

Ben couldn't help his face as it contorted while he watched Leslie walk away and head back towards the SUV, Ben pointed his key faub and unlocked the car for her and Bev while he stood next to Richie who watched them get into the car with his hands in his jacket pockets.

"You okay?" Ben asked.

Richie just nodded "Yep."

They both walked to the car in silence before Bill yelled out to them that they were heading towards the Barrens, and to park by the cliff; Ben nodded as he got into the car and started the ignition if only for the heat. Richie threw himself into the back and glared at Leslie who looked out the window.

Richie slammed the door closed to get her attention, but she didn't budge when he huffed and looked at Ben through the rear view mirror "To the Barrens, ol' chap!" he instructed, with a high pitched, over-dramatic British accent.

Bev and Ben chuckled while Leslie adjusted in her seat and looked straight ahead at the sea of snow, still not looking at Richie as he reached out for her hand, but she recoiled.

"Barrens, it is." Ben said softly before pulling away from the curb.